

ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of organizations is in large part due to the performance and satisfaction of the managers. Research in the field of Managerial stress suggests that stress leads to discontent and lowered performance. The nature of the manager's function, will have implications on the nature and extent of stress he experiences due to inherent differences between functions. One way for the organization to detect and control stress is through studying the functional manager. Thus far in literature a functional conceptualization of managerial stress has not emerged. The present study is an attempt to conceptualize and measure functional stress of managers and examine functional stress in relation to several antecedents and consequences.

The objectives of the study were as follows -

- 1 To conceptualize and develop a measure of functional stress and compare stress profiles of managers of different functions
- 2 To analyze functional stress in relation to the antecedent variables age, hierarchical level, tenure in the function, organizational sector, locus of control, and structure of the functional area
- 3 To analyze functional stress in relation to coping, strain, commitment to the function, job involvement and turnover intentions
- 4 To make suggestions for effective management of functional stress at the organizational level

A literature review and discussions with managers helped identify eight groups of stressors, viz , ambiguity and uncertainty, work and overwork, responsibilities, travel, boundary spanning activities, power and status inequalities, decision making

in crises and technology changes Literature indicated that socio-demographic variables, viz , age, level, tenure, organizational sector, structure, and locus of control also influence the experience of stress Outcome variables included coping strategies, strain, commitment to the function, job involvement and turnover intentions Measures for functional stress and related variables were developed and finalized after preliminary and pilot studies were conducted based on opinion of experts and item analysis

A survey methodology was adopted and the sample consisted of 238 managers from five considered functional areas `t' tests, univariate and multivariate analysis of variance, correlation and stepwise multivariate regression analyses were computed in order to achieve the objectives of the study

Factor analysis of the functional stress measure yielded a nine factor solution The nine factors were named role ambiguity, work pressure, responsibility for people, responsibility for things, travel, being on the interface, status of the function, crisis situations and keeping up with change The factor analysis results with the theoretical backing served to validate the instrument and the conceptualization of the stressors A comparison of differences in the stressors across the five functional areas indicated that the Production and Finance manager's greatest stressors were responsibility for things and crisis situations Marketing managers reported that being on the interface and crisis situations caused them maximum stress Personnel managers reported role ambiguity, responsibility for people and being on the interface while R&D managers reported keeping up with change and responsibility for things caused them most tension

A comparison of scores across groups based on personal and organizational variables indicated that in the total sample, the stressors did not differ across age, level, tenure in the function, and organizational sector groups. The stressors differed significantly across groups based on functional areas, locus of control, and the functional structure variables. Regression results indicated that locus of control and functional structure were the most significant predictors of the functional stressors.

The third objective was to study functional stress in relation to two coping strategies, problem focussed coping and emotion focused coping. It was found that for all the nine stressors managers appear to use more problem focused than emotion focused coping and the nature and level of stress has an influence on the type of coping strategy employed. The use of both coping strategies appeared to increase with increasing stress levels for certain stressors.

Results showed that increased stress led to increased strain. Regression results indicated that a different set of stressors contributed significantly to the strain experienced by the managers for each functional area. These results show how functional stress can have a direct effect on the managers. Results indicated that increased stress leads to decreased commitment to the function, less job involvement, and greater turnover intentions. Regression analysis indicated that strain significantly influenced the three organizationally valued states by contributing to lowered commitment, lowered job involvement and

increased turnover intentions. Several stressors also had an influence on the organizationally valued outcomes.

Based on the findings from this study, it was suggested that

- 1 Organizations need to conduct periodic surveys to identify stressors of different functional areas
- 2 A study of the structural requirements of each function in order to provide a structure where managers can work most efficiently would also be helpful
- 3 Training and personality development will help managers develop an internal and more responsible outlook
- 4 A knowledge of the amount and nature of stress experienced by the managers will help them reevaluate their coping styles. Counselling and job redesign will increase the managers' well-being and also serve to strengthen their organizationally valued states
- 5 It would be useful for future researchers in this field to measure total stress of the manager and find out how much functional stress contributes to it

In conclusion, the importance of the present study lies in the conceptualization of functionally dependent stress of managers and in demonstrating that managers of different functional areas face stress due to different functionally generated stressors. This study has also explored the concept of functional structure and found its relationship with stress. The study has provided insight into the stress-coping relationship. It has shown the direct influence of functional stress on strain. Finally, it has demonstrated the negative relationship between functional stress and strain and the organizationally valued states.